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# Advocate of Peace

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## SAFETY FOR DEMOCRACIES

THE length of the present war depends upon the action of the German government, and that there is to be some action within that government soon is apparent. The Reichstag, inspired in no small measure, we believe, by the crystal utterances of President Wilson, seems bent upon clearing up the German political situation. The Emperor's many conferences are not without significance. It would seem that he is forced at last to give heed unto the demands for suffrage reforms in Prussia, indeed for a parliamentarized Germany. The three big parties, with Dr. Mathais Erzberger leading the centrists, Philip Scheidemann leading the socialists, and the National Liberals, find themselves increasingly in accord upon the basic principles of internal Teuton reforms. These parties have sensed, as have many leading persons at the Hapsburg court, that the one great obstacle to the cessation of war is the Prussian system. The intolerable egotisms and self-seeking machinations of that system are becoming more and more intolerable to the disillusionized subjects of the Central Powers. From Erzberger's speech before the star-chamber session of the main committee of the Reichstag, it is clear that leading Prussians are beginning to sense the meaning of the words "the world safe for democracies." It is becoming more and more evident that the German people are ashamed to be thought slaves of their military caste. Out of the ruins of German junkerism there is certain to arise a finer German democracy. The sooner this arrives the sooner will the war end.

But the accomplishment of this will be no easy thing. The military reactionists are still very powerful. The royal families throughout the German states are naturally anxious to retain their royal prerogatives. For them democracy spells disruption. The Kaiser's rescript, supplementing his Easter proposal, paves the way for equal franchise, not in some remote period subsequent to the war, but early enough that "the next elections may take place according to the new franchise." If this brings consternation to the royal families of Germany, it brings an infinite hope to the rest of humanity.

It must now be apparent to the Prussian party in power that they are doomed. The success of the Russian democracy removes any bases for the charge made by the Imperial German Chancellor July 26, 1914, that Russia "has to bear the entire responsibility." But, which is more to the point, that success must hearten immeasurably

the liberal forces throughout mid-Europe. The failure of the imperial coup in China must have a similar effect upon the Germany of "Me and God," "The Day," and a Kaiser recommending the methods of the Hun during the Boxer rebellion. The last considerable remnant of the divine rights of kings is on the downward path within Germany itself.

This does not mean that Germany shall cease to exist. It means that Germany will begin to live. The destruction of the military party in Germany is, indeed, the only method left to Germany of protecting and conserving her existence. It is the German military spirit, not confined wholly to German territory we regret to say, that has led to the commission of all the unlawful acts against innocent and unoffending states. Of such is the essence of military leadership especially in mid-Europe. Its philosophy is the philosophy of force, and force primarily. It ignores what the rest of the world is more rapidly learning, namely: that above physical force is that greater and more enduring psychical force out of which springs the hope and progress of the world. If any one is in doubt about the meaning of "the world safe for democracies," let him watch carefully the evolution of the popular will during the next few years within what is now the German hegemony.

## A PROPITIOUS PEACE AND A GOVERNED WORLD

THE dictionary definition of "propitious" indicates that one so described is "ready to grant a favor or indulgence; kind; disposed to be gracious or merciful; ready to forgive and bestow favors." Can the Allied Nations in the day of victory present such a propitiatory attitude to the conquered? Can they maintain it through the wrangles and disputes of a peaceful settlement?

These questions are pertinent in the light of a recent pronouncement of the French Premier at the final session of the fourth convocation of the "Parlement Interallié" in Paris, typical of a number of similar statements recently made in France. M. Ribot, after declaring France's earnest desire for a peace that will transcend the *status quo ante*, and which will not "oppress any people, any nation, not even those who are our enemies today," passed on to a qualifying sentence in which may be found sinister auguries for the spirit of propitiation and an enduring peace:

But can any one reproach us [he continued] for desiring with all our hearts to destroy that oppression that has for so long lain heavy upon the whole world, for demanding guarantees of future peace, restitution and compensation, and punishment as well for the authors of the crimes against common right which are the disgrace of this war? [The italics are our own.]

We are come to those parlous times when it is considered treason to speak a word in behalf of the German and his allies; but when to speak in his behalf is to urge the successful attainment of the peace for which our sons will die and our elders suffer sorrow and want, we are inclined to say "if this be treason, make the most of it." If we are inclined to hesitate, therefore, it is not that we seem to bespeak propitiation for the enemy, but because, even on behalf of a durable peace, we ask for a great sacrifice from an allied nation, and a nation which, of all those at war, has suffered the greatest voluntary losses already, and today stands before the world bleeding, anguished, and all but crushed by sorrow.

For, if M. Ribot's words represent the true feeling of his people, then this additional sacrifice must be asked. France must give up the kind of punishment for conquered Germany referred to by M. Ribot. It is not we who ask it, but all the world; for the peace which the world craves today depends implicitly and absolutely upon the spirit of propitiation, upon the disposition evinced by all the nations, France included, "to be gracious or merciful," "to forgive and bestow favors." This has been acknowledged by one of M. Ribot's own countrymen, M. Charles Dupuis, in his acceptance (as recorded on page 198 of our last issue) of the "Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Nations" as the "will to justice," "upon which depends the salvation of the society of nations as of society itself."

"The Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Nations" is squarely founded on the spirit of propitiation. It is not something that may be imposed upon a meek and spiritless world. It is not a code that may be followed blindly by the docile or negligent. It is the essence of the highest and deepest principles of international justice, which must be subscribed to with understanding, upheld by the living force of that very "will to justice" of which M. Dupuis has written, made possible by the insistent sacrifice on the part of the peoples of things they hold dear, when these stand in the way of the functioning of these principles.

The aching desire for compensation, the all too human longing to impose punishment for wrongs, the hope for a reward such as will balance pain and sorrow and make up in part for what is irretrievably lost—these must be put away as speedily and entirely as the less wholesome emotions of greed, revenge, and lust for power. They are not of the spirit of propitiation. They are antagonistic, especially at this time, to the implications of the

rights and duties of nations. They are the enemies of a durable peace and a governed world. "Every nation has the right to exist, . . . every nation has the right to independence, . . . every nation is in law and before law the equal of every other nation belonging to the society of nations"—these are the rights of each nation, together with "the right to the pursuit of happiness," "to develop itself without interference or control from other States," "to assume, among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle it," to have its rights "respected and protected by all other nations." And—"the right of one is the duty of all to observe."

The fires of vengeance cannot be mingled with the healing waters of solicitude that each nation shall have its just rights in full measure. The same France cannot seek to establish Germany's right to existence, independence, equality, and the pursuit of happiness, and at the same time seek to exact penalties from and impose punishments upon Germany. Not only will France or any other nation frustrate by such double aim the purposes for which it suffers and battles on, but it will beggar the memory of its sons who have suffered and died namelessly for the better world their blood was to buy.

Were all the nations which war on the Allied side as insistent as France seems now and then to be for the establishment of these obstacles to a governed world, the prospect would indeed be black. Fortunately, that is not the case. America has scarcely had her purposes tried in the fire as yet, but she enters upon the struggle, at least with the determination, in her leader's words, "to seek no indemnities for ourselves, no material compensation for the sacrifices we shall freely make. . . . We have no selfish ends to serve. We desire no conquest, no dominion." We have further expressed our intention to "conduct our operations as belligerents without passion and ourselves observe with proud punctilio the principles of right and of fair play we profess to be fighting for."

So far so good. Great Britain has uttered many a sinister hint as to the gains she wishes to be favored with as the reward of victory, but the recent speech of Premier Lloyd George, at Glasgow, implying that such matters as the retention of the colonies won in Africa would be left to arbitration, has at least opened a door to the spirit of propitiation. We can but hope that that door to international amity will not be closed prematurely. Belgium cries aloud for indemnification, and not unjustly, for there is every reason to believe that penalties have been extorted from her which it is her right and therefore the duty of all other nations to see restored. She has suffered beyond the ordinary trans-

gressions of war. This much should be hers again, in so far as it is humanly possible to effect restoration. When that much has been accomplished, it will be time to look to her, as we shall look to all nations, "to forgive and bestow favors."

Of all the Allied Nations the most hopeful, in view of the propitiatory spirit thus far shown, is Russia. No more perfect evidence of this spirit is to be found than in her declaration, in the words of her emissary, Boris A. Bakmetieff (see page 200 of our last issue), that she has put away all thought of "dominion over other nations," or "seizure of their national property," and asks only "peace with no annexations or contributions, based upon the free determination by each nation of its destinies." No more propitiatory, if not big and constructive, proposal has been made than the plan of the Council of Workmen's and Soldiers' Deputies for the restoration of the devastated districts of the war zone. This is, that a fund of twenty-five milliards of francs (*ca.* \$5,000,000,000) shall be constituted and contributed in common by all the belligerents of both camps, the individual assessment to be based upon the proportional war expenditures, and the outlay to be distributed in proportion to the assessed damage. Such a spirit of propitiation, whether or not the plan proposed is practicable, not only builds the foundations of future peace, but materially accelerates the approach of the day upon which that peace is to be made. The Russians have renounced the share of Turkey, Constantinople, which had been allotted to them, and in so doing they have eliminated one of the things that must be wrested from the enemy. That in itself is a step towards peace. Further, if Russian aid is to be retained by the Allies, it is evident that Russia will in turn expect the other Allies to take equal or proportional steps towards a settlement. Propitiation breeds propitiation. It even compels propitiation, when so important a factor as the continued good will and support of a country like Russia is involved.

All these facts support the statement recently made by H. N. Brailsford, the British authority on economics and the Near East, in *The New Republic*: "If once the idea of penalizing German trade and destroying German expansion were honestly abandoned, some of the territorial questions would dwindle into details." And behind the question of dethroning autocracy, which is today our prime motive in the war, these territorial questions loom large. Indeed, it is not too much to say that, were they abandoned, were Germany certain that her rights would be regarded as the duty of all the other nations to observe, autocracy itself would weaken and lose much of its threatening aspect, or, its present supporters once confident that autocracy would not be

needed to secure them justice, it might be by those very supporters speedily tumbled to the ground.

The reader is urged to read over again very carefully, though it be for the hundredth time, the first page of this issue, entitled "A Governed World." He will unfailingly find, once its substance is adequately grasped, that the backbone and irresistible strength of the "Rights and Duties of Nations" as well as of "An International Program for Peace Through Justice," which is founded on the statement of these rights and duties, is the declaration there embodied that "right and duty are correlative, and the right of one is the duty of all to observe." And the spirit that breathes in and animates this principle is the pure spirit of propitiation.

### WHAT WE ARE SUPPORTING

THE ADVOCATE OF PEACE welcomes every honest and intelligent contribution to the solution of the problems of war and peace. In this issue we are glad to publish the statement from an old and trusted friend of this Society, Rev. Charles F. Dole. This journal aims to spread for the consideration of all of us the differing opinions of some of us. Somehow, somewhere, we must get at each other's thought.

We regret that Dr. Dole makes the old familiar mistake in his arraignment of our attitude, by classifying the American Peace Society with "pacifists who uphold war whenever their governments declare war." The fact is that we do not uphold war. We are first, last, and all the time opposed to war. We are opposed to this war. We would have it cease at the earliest possible time commensurate with an international situation which would make the repetition of such a war impossible.

Before our Government declared itself in a state of war we did everything within our power to advertise the principles of judicial settlement of international disputes. It is not a matter of theory, but a matter of fact, that the world has reached a situation where the judicial settlement of international disputes is for the time impracticable. After the Government to which we owe allegiance declared itself in a state of war, the judicial settlement of the disputes between this country and Germany became not only impracticable, but unthinkable. That we sense this does not mean that our opposition to war is abated. Quite the contrary. We are opposed to the war, as President Wilson is opposed to the war. Furthermore, as practical people interested in concrete results, we are supporting the President in overcoming the German government for the very purpose that the war may be ended.

We are all tempted just here to dive into theoretical